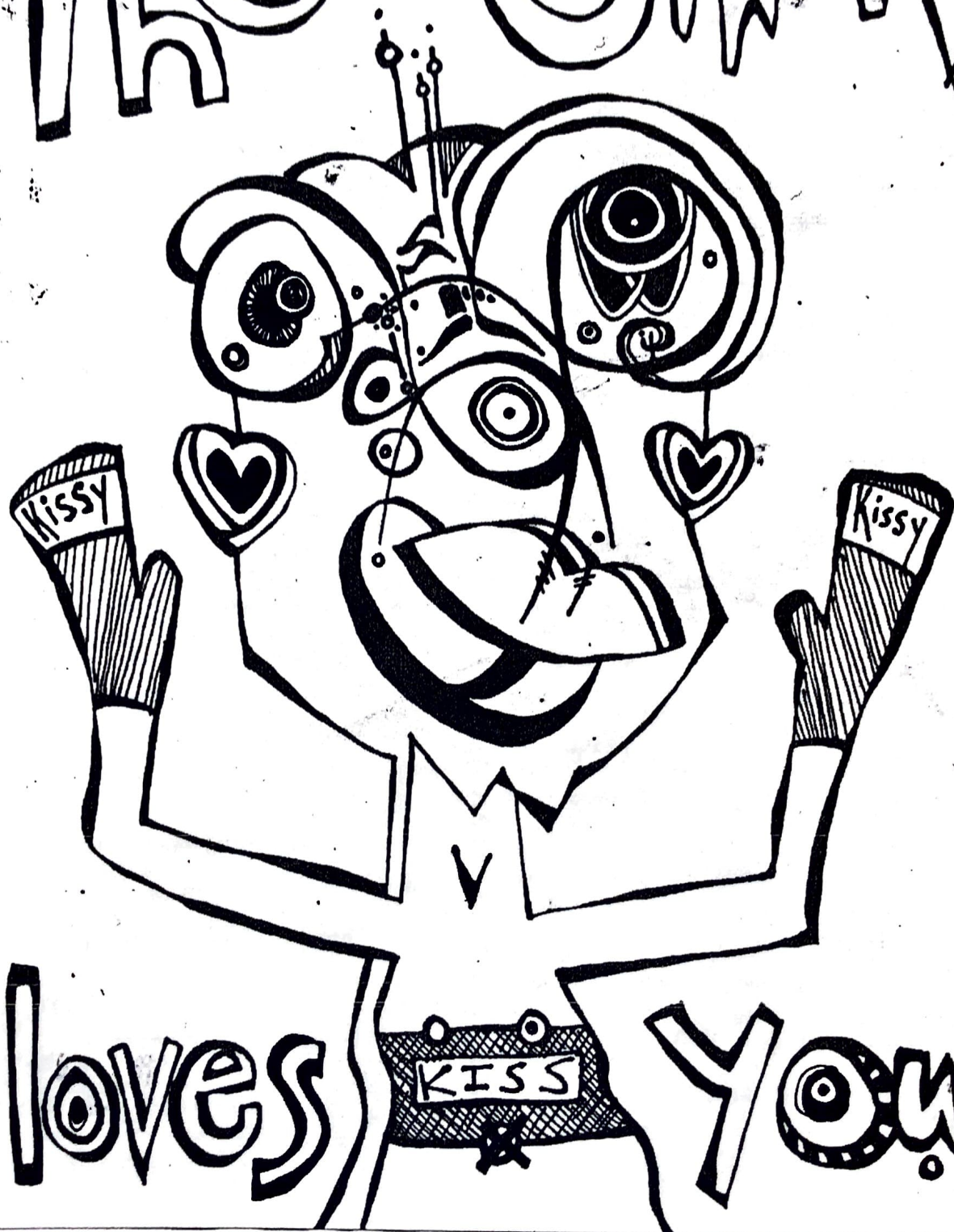


The Okeh



loves

KISS

You

Table of Contents

To, the third issue of the 32nd Volume of the Omen on April the seventeenth in the Year of our Lord 2009.

I guess to be accurate we haven't really been publishing a "table" of contents, lately, but something closer to a summary of what the contents of the issue are. Off the top of my head, this issue contains several lists, some critiques of the mass media, some critiques of certain Hampshire College individuals, some comics, and maybe some other stuff that I don't really remember right now. Thanks for your patience.



To Submit:

Submissions are due always, constantly, so submit forever. You can submit in rich text or plain text format by CD, Flash Drive, singing telegram, carrier pigeon, paper airplane, Fed-Ex, Pony Express, zergling, or email. Get your submissions to Evan Silberman, Prescott 102E, box 1394, ejs07@hampshire.edu.

"If Bera had a fiddle and a roof, he would combine these two things."

—David Axel Kurtz

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April 17, 2009

I Suck A Lot

by Evan Silberman

Crap.

Crap crap crap crap.

It's been like five or six weeks since I last got an issue of the Omen to duplications. This is simply unacceptable. I owe you better than that, dear reader. I owe it to the illustrious history of this publication to not let submissions languish in my inbox for a month, avoiding my responsibility to the community.

But Christ, is it lonely when I'm down here by myself.

I'm so alone.

Um, anyway.

I'm going to try to do better from now on. I'm probably going to fail again, because it's getting to the end of the semester and I have a lot of work to do. Including several things that are overdue, much like this issue of the Omen is.

(But you know I bet I would've been more motivated to finish this shit up if people sent submissions hint hint.)

I really can't keep up this autoflagellation that long. I've been trying to be less self-deprecating lately. So the rest of this Editorial is going to be about another topic entirely.

OK, thinking of a topic now. Gotta be witty and compelling, gotta make 'em thing I'm not a loser. Topic topic topic.

Sandwiches. There we go.

So, like, I'm an incredibly picky eater. Seriously picky. I eat basically zero fruits or vegetables. I eat onions, is pretty much it, and "herbs and spices" if those are vegetables by some metric. So when I'm eating at a place that serves sandwiches, I tend to zero in on whatever sandwich contains only ingredients that I like without having to make special requests. I hereby present to you my Personal Sandwich Menu for several prominent sandwich establishments.

Cosi: Pesto Chicken Melt. Contains chicken, pesto, some sort of tomato sauce thing, mozzarella.

Andiamo: Venice. Contains prosciutto, mozzarella, basil, and caramelized onions.

Quiznos: Steakhouse Beef Dip OR Prime Rib Peppercorn. The former contains beef, swiss, and seasoning and comes with au jus. The latter contains beef, onions, some sort of dressing, cheese, and more beef. I love Quiznos.

Subway: Why would I ever eat at Subway?

The Black Sheep: I actually have ordered a variety of sandwiches from the Black Sheep. All of them have been slightly disappointing. ☹

Policy

The Omen is a biweekly publication that is the world's only example of the consistent application of a straightforward policy: we publish all signed submissions from members of the Hampshire community that are not libelous. Send us your impassioned yet poorly-thought-out rants, self-insertion fan fiction, MS Paint comics, and whiny emo poetry; we'll publish it all, and we're happy to do it. The Omen is about giving you a voice, no matter how little you deserve it. Since its founding in December of 1992 by Stephanie Cole, the Omen has hardly ever missed an issue, making it Hampshire's longest-running publication.

Your Omen submission (you're submitting right now, right?) might not be edited,

and we can't promise any spellchecking either, so any horrendous mistakes are your fault, not ours. We do promise not to insert comical spelling mistakes in submissions to make you look foolish. Your submission must include your real name: an open forum comes with a responsibility to take ownership of your views. (Note: Views expressed in the Omen do not necessarily reflect the views of the Omen editor, the Omen staff, or anyone, anywhere, living or dead.)

The Omen staff consists of whoever shows up for Omen layout, which usually takes place on alternate Saturday nights in the basement of Merrill on a computer with an extremely inadequate monitor. You should come. We don't bite. You can find the Omen on other Fridays in Saga, the post office, or on the door of your mod.

The Omen Haiku

Views in the Omen (5)

Do not necessarily (7)

Reflect the staff's views (5)

HATE

Words That I Hear Way Too Much by Jordan Persson

They say you shouldn't use a ten-dollar word where a ten-cent one will do, and this is exactly why – overuse devalues words that sound smart, making them sound like shit instead. More accurately, it makes you sound pretentious as hell. These words, among others, have been floating around way too much lately.

Dichotomy

The dichotomy of this, the dichotomy of that. This word comes in the titles of papers, in the first paragraph, in the final sentence and often everywhere in between. What's it mean? A separation or difference between two categories. There's a dichotomy between bullshit words and useful ones, and "dichotomy" falls soundly on the BS side.

Ethnic

Thinking of using this word in place of whatever race you're referring to? Don't. The word "ethnic" doesn't refer to any race, it just means that whatever you're saying is ethnic is part of a race. Not a specific race, just any race. I'm a Caucasian male from Rhode Island, and I'm just as ethnic as anyone else. In fact, maybe I'm more so – the word originally meant "heathen."

Pastiche

I made a pastiche once when I was 9 by gluing magazine bits to a piece of paper. Yup, it's just another fancy word that means something simple – in this case, it's a collage, or if you want to be technical, a "combination of materials from different sources." Mishmash, hodgepodge, whatever. If you don't want to sound like a kid, get edgy by calling it a clusterfuck.

Discourse

You start off by going to a discourse on the latest issue, then you have a discourse with your friend about where to eat. On the way back to your room, you see that guy who you always run into in the hall but you don't actually know his name, so you have a discourse with him that consists of "hey." That's right, all a discourse is is a talk, a chat or a discussion. When you speak to another person, you're having a discourse. This shitty write-up is a discourse. Please, stop using that word just to imply you actually have something worthwhile to say.

Hegemony

Look, I get it – there's a lot of talk about corporations and oppressive majorities and all of that, but this means that the word "hegemony" gets thrown around 30 times in any class on culture. You can say "dominance," you can say "leadership," hell, you can say "alien mind control" for all the fucks I give. It's gotten so bad that the last magazine page I read used "hegemony" three times in as many paragraphs. The "hegemony" hegemony needs to stop. ☹

Divestment

by David Axel Kurtz

I've been hearing a lot of talk about Divestment these past few weeks. It seems many people want my college to Divest. I'm not entirely sure what is meant by this word.

I think that Divestment, in this instance, means, "selling stocks of Israeli companies who have supported the Israeli military presence in Gaza." I've heard some people expand this definition a bit, to mean "selling stocks of all companies that are in the State of Israel."

I've also hear it expanded to mean "selling stocks in all companies, the world over, who have in some way facilitated the Israeli military."

I get the impression that some people would like it to mean "selling stocks in all companies that somehow support the State of Israel in general."

I guess the end result is about the same, regardless. The Divestment is caused by a condemnation of Israeli's recent military activities in Gaza. The desired effect of the Divestment is to make this condemnation public.

It's a mainly symbolic act. Since we as a college don't have much money, our divestment couldn't make that big of a difference. We only had, what, a 30 million dollar endowment? And that was before the stock market tanked!

Moreover, we have a stock portfolio of well over 300 stocks. The fund which we sold off was made up of over 200 stocks alone. That doesn't even count our international investment fund. Let alone our non-stock investments.

Of these 200, I think 4 were stocks that some students wanted us to Divest ourselves of. That's 2% of the fund. Even assuming that the fund was a whole third of our endowment, which I think is a really big assumption, that's still only \$200,000 we've Divested.

That's not exactly world-shaking. I mean, most of the major Israeli defense industries are privately-held, if not downright nationalized. They are multi-billion dollar companies; their CEOs probably make more than \$200,000 per week. Certainly they make more than that per month. Two hundred grand is probably what their minibar tab is at the Tel Aviv Hilton.

But let's look at public companies, companies that we

could Divest from. Take Check Point Software Technologies. Among other things, they make products which help control Israel's borders. They're a small company, but they have a market capitalization of nearly five billion dollars. That's \$4,950,000,000. We sold maybe \$50,000 of any one stock. That's hardly a drop in the ocean.

Especially because I'm pretty sure Hampshire still owns its shares of Check Point. As an Investment, as it were.

So yeah, Divestment doesn't really seem to be about changing the world directly. It's about a symbol. It's about Hampshire College standing up and saying, as one voice, "I don't support this." It's about trying to do so loudly, and grandly, so that other people will hear us. The goal of Divestment is that other organizations will follow our example.

Now, I know I don't leave my room that often. I know I haven't participated in any activities regarding "Israel" or "Palestine" or really anything within a thousand miles of Jerusalem. I haven't been involved with any related activities done by any student groups.

And I've been very careful to avoid these things. Because I really don't want to have support one side of another.

Some people have been talking about condemning Israel. Some people have been talking about supporting Israel. Some few people even talk about condemning or supporting Hamas, or Fatah. Everyone seems to have an opinion. At least one.

I don't. I don't have an opinion.

I think it's good to study the "Israeli/Palestinian conflict," and I have. I think it's good to learn about it, to analyze it, and to talk about it. But after having done a good deal of these things, I can say that I still don't have an opinion. I don't support Divestment. I don't support Investment. I have no agenda I wish to pursue, and no opinion I wish to make public.

So imagine my surprise when I find out that my college has "Divested" from something-or-other, the end result being that it has publicly condemned the State of Israel.

Doesn't matter that we haven't really done anything sub-

stantive in our Divestment. It's the symbol, right? My college has symbolically condemned the State of Israel. In doing so it is urging other institutions, academic and beyond, to do the same.

There have been banners hung from the library. There have been rallies on the Quad. There was even a letter passed around to the faculty, which something like sixty professors signed. All of these express an opposition to the actions of the State of Israel. At the very mildest.

Well, I know I haven't condemned the State of Israel. I haven't approved of it either. I haven't denounced Hamas either, nor have I given it even my symbolic support. I do not wish to support or condemn any of these things, organizations or causes or anything. I am quite active in my desire not to express an opinion, symbolic or otherwise, in regards to their conflicts.

Divestment means that Hampshire College has stood up and said something with one voice. I don't care if we're Divesting from something, or even if we're Investing in something. I haven't said anything. I have not given my support. I have not, and I do not, want to be represented as having an opinion when I do not have one.

Hampshire College is speaking to the world with one voice. I am part of Hampshire College. I am part of that voice. Hampshire College is speaking for me. And I don't want it to be.

I was never asked my opinion about Divestment. I was never given a vote. And now the library is full of posters quoting famous people, praising Hampshire for its actions. I am part of Hampshire and I am not acting. I don't want Hampshire to be acting on my behalf, without my consent.

If asked to support Hampshire's Divestment, its symbolic condemnation, I would have said No. I would have opposed it. Because I don't want to condemn anything, and I don't want anyone doing so on my behalf.

If asked to support Hampshire's symbolic approval of something, its Investment, I would have said No. I would have opposed it. Because I don't want to support anything, and I don't want anyone doing so on my behalf.

And I know that this college isn't a democracy. I know it's not a place where a student's voice can easily be heard. Our constitution is pretty much a dead document. The de facto is really the de jure; if you can get it to happen, it hap-

pens, and that's about all.

But we still have a vote of sorts, a *de facto* vote. We vote every time we pay our tuition. We vote every time we show up to class. If our College is making statements we don't agree with, it seems the only recourse we have is to stop attending it. To stop paying our tuition. To vote with our feet, and with our check-books. That's the only vote we really have.

I don't want to be so extreme. I want to keep coming to Hampshire. I would love there to be a way that the College could speak with one voice. I think there are a number of ways this could be brought about. The Athenians had some good ideas on the subject, back in the day.

But the way it is now, the College is speaking, and the world is listening. If you disagree with what the College saying, it seems that it's your responsibility to leave.

That's the problem with extreme government. It requires extreme opposition. If you don't like something in a democracy, you can vote against it. If you don't like something in a dictatorship, there's only revolution or emigration.

I'm not a revolutionary. I'm happy just being a student. But I don't want to be an émigré either. So I am submitting this document in opposition to what has been going on, and to the system that has allowed it to happen. Consider this my little revolution. I'm not willing to devote any more of my time and effort to it, so I hope it will have an impact.

I think that, in the world in general, the people in the middle always seem to get dragged to the extremes. Because if it's only the extremists who are talking, then people begin to think that the extremists are the only people out there.

So here's my voice. Right from the middle. Here's my voice which is not being heard. I am a part of Hampshire College and here is what I have to say:

I do not support Hampshire College, my college, acting one way or another towards Israel.

If Hampshire is speaking for me, without asking me, then I condemn it. If it keeps doing so, I will Divest from it. I will take my tuition and take it somewhere else. I will vote with my feet, because that is the only vote that has been given to me.

And if there are student groups who are trying to get the world to believe that Hampshire speaks for me, then I condemn them too. I am a student of Hampshire College.

When they say that Hampshire has Divested, when they spend a great deal of effort trying to say that as loudly as they can, they are purporting to speak with my voice. They don't have my permission to do that. They have not gotten my support. They have not gotten my vote. It doesn't seem that they've even gotten Divestment!

So I will end this with a plea. Please stop using my voice without my consent. If you take away my voice, my ability to speak, all I will have left is the ability to walk away. And if that is all I am left with, that is what I will do. ☹

Put Away your Spraypaint, supporters/ detractors of NYU's Occupation by Arielle Soutar

One: we have a graffiti wall

Two: your skill in spraypainting is slight.

Three: I and everyone else pays for the maintenance of this school. Don't assume that we appreciate having to pay for power-washing your shoddy handwork off of the library.

Four: Find a more appropriate venue for your glee/vitriol. Chalk is good, talking is better. ☹

PLAYER NAMES I HAVE USED TO PLAY STARCRAFT

by David Axel Kuuuurtz

Warspite
Valiant
Terran Whore
Billybob TerranWhore
Buttsex McTeague
Ass Sex ODonovan
Anally Fisting McTeague
Punch Fist Jones
Punch Fist-Jones
Tits and the Maytals
Fellatio Rotoboef
Mad Sex With Thunderdome

TM Owen
Buttsex and William
LAZRS and of course buttsex
Nookie Face
Korean
Not Korean
Not Not Korean
Koreans
Jews
Buttsex Silverstein
Jewlaar of Jewdigrad
Horatio Cockpenis-Jones
Thaddeus McGillcuddy O'Fuckin
Thrust Bam Bam
OMGNOTTERRAN
melongrower
adam krellenstein
what a wanker spanker
urge2guri
riotous butt destruction
fill me up with luvvin
cock of a face
face of a face with cock
cock inside your cock
cock inside eric
FLYING COMMAND CENTER MAN
massed battlecruisers aka bera
fuck norway
fuck the norweigians
take it in the face
death star of david



twenty-five things that piss me off (in which madeleine rants about the flaws of the present human condition.) by Madeleine Hahn

1. liars. don't say something to my face and then do the opposite. it's really fucking obvious when the opposite is true.

2. flakes. especially the "yeah, totally, we should sometime" bullshit. you know why? because it never actually happens. take a chance on someone else and make some fucking commitments. it makes life so much easier when things are planned.

3. excuses. namely, the dismissive "i'm lazy," especially when used as a way to avoid helping someone. yes, you are lazy. that's nothing to be proud of.

4. selfishness. the world population surpassed 6.5 billion people last month. chances are, each decision you make affects at least a few of them.

5. excessive argumentativeness. does it really matter that fucking much that you have to be right? by the way, just because someone walks away from an argument does not mean you have "won." it just means that that person is sensible enough to know when it just isn't worth it anymore.

6. exceptions. specifically, people who believe they must be treated specially because they do not apply to the rule. there are basic human truths that everyone follows, and basic physical and psychological needs that everyone lives on. these small but basic assumptions of the human condition provide the foundation upon which all communication is possible. individual cultures have added to and refined these rules to serve for better communication within that culture at the cost of losing understanding among others. to dismiss those assumptions -- and to tell others to do the same for you -- is to destroy that foundation and make such communication difficult, if not impossible. to further believe that that communication is not necessary violates the basic human need for intimate relationships with others. so you think you're above it all. really? you're just like everyone else. get over it.

7. dismissiveness. again, over 6.5 billion people in the world. all of them have something to say. listen, and at the very least act like you're receptive.

8. people who "knock it" before they try it. if you don't care enough to gain the experience, it most certainly is not

your place to criticize those who do.

9. excessive loudness. our speech centers -- all those muscles in the mouth and throat, and the part of the brain that controls it all -- are capable of many things. volume control is one of them. take a hint and shut the fuck up.

10. messes. life is just better when things are clean and organized. try it sometime -- especially in places you inhabit with others.

11. bragging. really? if you're that special, people will notice and honor you for it. there is no need to constantly bring up your own accomplishments to show off how impressive you think you are. collectively there is an overuse of "i" and "me" anyway -- again, because we're too self-absorbed to notice others. try complimenting someone. it could brighten someone's day and make you look less like a pompous ass.

12. doubting abilities. i am capable of almost anything i care enough to put my mind to. do not dismiss accomplishments. ever. if you challenge me on my ability (especially something i am passionate about) i will prove you wrong and i will be better for it. so up yours.

13. those who believe that learning is purely academic. you honestly couldn't be more wrong. be as book-smart as you want; without life experience you are nothing. of course, no book will teach you that. so i guess you're kind of fucked. congratulations.

14. education. when was it decided that it would be a good idea never to tell a child "no"? young children are not capable of reason. if they aren't explicitly told that misbehaving is wrong, then they will continue to misbehave. parents and teachers are serving their kids and teaching them to be self-centered, stubborn brats rather than teaching them to be functioning members of society. because the benefits of learning are never demonstrated, they cruise through school without actually learning anything. they study simply to spew information on tests or other semi-relevant pieces of paper. and yet, these pieces of paper somehow define educational legitimacy. i may not go to a school with tests or grades, but at least i can remember and reapply everything i've learned here.

15. mixing religion and politics. what's best for you

personally is not best for an entire nation living under freedom of religion. do i need to make this point any clearer? we don't live bound by a religion, nor should we be forced to live by the rules mandated by one. your arguments have no place here. the fact that we're even listening to them is absurd enough. this is mostly reserved for the zealots who wouldn't know what research was if you hit them in the face with a fucking encyclopedia. here's a hint: if, at any point, the words "it's God's will" comes into a political article or debate, you're doing it wrong.

16. extremes. pretty much for the same reasons as 14, minus the religion. everything requires balance, moderation, harmony to function properly. compromises are the best way to make everyone happy.

17. media bubbles. modern technology has now allowed us to customize everything: news websites track the articles you read and recommend similar ones, customized radio stations and iPods let us listen to all our favorite music, all the time, and we now live in this culture where we don't have to see or hear anything we don't want to. as a society, we couldn't have made a bigger mistake. why? because nobody listens to anyone anymore. people seek out the news and ideals they align with and then only pay attention to that to reinforce their own points. they dismiss the opposing views -- worse yet, some don't even acknowledge that they exist -- making the chance to compromise damn near impossible. debates have been reduced to a bunch of talking points and a more refined version of "no, you're wrong!" in the words of dr. gregory house, "climb out of your holes, people."

18. doing a shitload of work all for naught. because often, the work that was put in isn't recognized. not that i'm opposed to being goal-oriented, but it's nice to have a little acknowledgement -- credit where credit is due.

19. obliviousness. you wronged someone. do something to mend it. are people so blind that they don't even notice or care that they have hurt another person? it's never safe to assume that things are "just fine" and that whatever is wrong will simply blow over, no harm done. except there was harm done. wouldn't you rather have the verbal reassurance that things are fine rather than sit back and assume they are when

they potentially may not be? conversely, people are too forgiving. those who were wronged are too often too quick to forgive because keeping that bond is more important than telling their friend that what was done is not okay. everyone has a breaking point, and allowing those reluctant acceptances to build only causes them to reach that point sooner. have fun salvaging the pieces after that explosion.

20. people telling me i knit too much. my apologies for being productive with my time. seriously, go find a hobby of your own. i can see what a fuckload of good complaining is doing for you.

21. the "what's in it for me?" mentality. just because the answer is "nothing" doesn't mean it's not worth doing. i'm sick of people having to use incentives to entice others to participate in n'importe quoi. it really wouldn't kill you to take a little time to be selfless.

22. excessive niceness. i have a hard time believing that those people are as sweet and innocent and kind as they make themselves out to be. that sort of facade only sets up for disappointment.

23. avoidance. it's cowardly and rude. at least face the other person, for their benefit and yours. to be avoidant is to withhold information and only instill more doubts in their heads. the dumbest and most irritating thing? the avoidant ones often deny it or say there's no reason for it. if there was no reason, there would be no need for the avoidance. and usually it takes a confrontation before the denial happens. if there wasn't avoidance, then a confrontation wouldn't be necessary either.

24. living with regrets. especially after attempting a countless number of times to will away those regrets. regrets leave me with a strong desire to clean the slate and start over in a new place with people i don't know. i'm not ready to start over yet. i'm pissed that things got fucked over so quickly.

25. the past six months of my life. i won't warrant that with any further explanation. ☹

SPEAK

The Slumdog Rage by Yash R. Patankar

Sitting in my room past midnight, reading and hearing about the number of the Oscars won by the much overrated and hyped *Slumdog Millionaire*, director Danny Boyle's latest flick, I have to take this opportunity (sic) to jot down what the movie portrays. To all those people who are new to the culture of India, let it be known that this was not even close to an imitation of a Bollywood movie. What Boyle has failed to perceive and the west has ignorantly appreciated is the blown up fantasy, which constitutes most of the movie as well as the insensitivity, which crops up not once and the glitches which give the impression of the movie, which as perceived by many, flowing.

Jamal, the character around which the movie revolves firstly seems like a fantastical caricature to me. One of the very first scenes in the movie, which seems boisterous and gladly enjoyed by many, in which Jamal jumps in human excreta, blew it off. Boyle's portrayal of the kid going through thick and thin to an extent that is beyond perception for the bare sake of getting Amitabh Bacchan's autograph is a mere slander of the reality. Amitabh Bacchan can undoubtedly be called one of the greatest Bollywood superstars, but to show that a person can literally jump in a pool of goop for the sake of an autograph is a mere misrepresentation. This is one of the very first inconsistencies in the movie with some of the others to mention being the fact that Jamal falls in love with Latika at a tender age and does not forget about her through his long journey to Agra and comes back to Mumbai in search of his lost love as well as the downright fluency with which Jamal, Salim and Latika speak British English after transitioning from Hindi! What are even more baffling are the characters he meets and the series of events that follows, one of them being the child actor playing the blinded beggar knowing about Benjamin Franklin, although not having sought any sort of formal education. The storyline, which

many people do not pay attention to, is baseless and the whole liveliness of the movie invoked by the colorful songs which are part of the movie is what kept some of the audience enlivened. What people fail to see is the insensitivity that is also portrayed along with the liveliness, which seems to celebrate the spirit of the slum-dwellers that is candid mockery. If it was to depict the life of a slum-dweller, it fails to depict the nuances in the life of that person and blows the veracity out of proportion. The poverty, which at first glance is new and entertaining actually shows the insolent ignorance of the people who enjoy it – if you fail to see the reality in which people actually live, as a matter of an iota of justice to their troubled souls at least do not take pleasure in the portrayal and offend their dignity. The reality is often much more labyrinthine and multi-layered than it seems.

Other inconsistencies which I am coerced to mention are the scene in which the Sardar in the train grips on to Jamal with such vigorous annoyance that Jamal and Salim eventually end up falling off the train roof for stealing a roti – even the most cynical person might not think of performing such an inhumane act in my opinion, but it adds up to the list of stereotypes – and when the American couple's *chauffeur* coldheartedly beats and kicks Jamal, whereupon he says to the tourists, "You wanted to see a bit of real India, here it is" and the American lady replies, "Well, here is a bit of the real America son" and hints towards her husband to give a hefty sum of a hundred dollars to Jamal. What is the movie trying to give the impression of India as?

It would not be unfair even if it might seem candid that SM is a westerner's view of India, which is very often misperceived and stereotyped as a corollary. The only difference is the epoch in which these stereotypes are labeled, with India being a land of snake charmers in the past to a country of rags at present. Even if it might be in shackled

rags due to various reasons which are beyond the scope of this essay, how many know about the present global significance of these billion and more people? Not to say that the global economy has not affected India, but how many know that India's GDP clocked 9% in 2008 during the meltdown? For those sporting *cher* Gap apparel, how many know that Gap manufactures some of its clothing at Connaught Place in Delhi and there was a recent incident of unforced child labor going into it? How many people know that the leather jackets they wear might have been manufactured in Dharavi, where SM starts from? This is not my claim against child labor, but let it be known that what you wear could have come at the cost of the poor lives dwelling in the slums.

Tapeshwar Vishwakarma, a representative of a slum-dwellers' welfare group, recently filed a lawsuit which was fueled by the use of the word slum "dog". Would it not be inhumane to call someone who calls the slum their home a dog? Do you not find the streak of racism that shows its ugly face through the title, especially calling a whole faction of the population dogs? All the west wants to acknowledge and attribute is what it has not seen before, poverty slums fetters child labor, which is saddening enough. The recent outrages by some of the well-known Hindi film industry personalities such as Amitabh Bacchan, Priyadarshan and Aadesh Shrivastava are proof to this.

If people agree that the story was baseless but liked the movie plainly for the animated songs and the music, I feel sorry for they have not been exposed to the Hindi film industry and should rather familiarize themselves with Hindi movies, most of which, if not all, have songs and music, which sets up the base to a certain degree for the movie if they liked SM. Boyle cites the influence of popular Hindi movies *Deewar* (1975), *Satya* (1998), *Company* (2002) and *Black Friday* (2004) and if you are looking for a realistic view of Mumbai, the best one out of Boyle's own cited references would be *Satya*, although the content vastly differs. Or if you want a literal ride through a fast-paced and multifaceted city like Mumbai, Shantaram would be an ideal novel to pick with Gregory David Roberts clearly describing prose as poetry with a flow that will keep you captivated; it is a tribute to Mumbai!

It is not the poverty which I am against; it is the voyeurism Boyle portrays through the poverty. There are a number of other Hindi movies depicting poverty, but what SM becomes as a consequence of the territory and the way

in which it covers is poverty porn. Boyle mentions that he did not want to portray India in bad light, but as a matter of the storyline, there is tremendous misrepresentation of facts along with the emphasis on stereotypes.

It would be a plea, if not an ardent cry, for not depicting any country in slanderous light consequentially. For those who glorify the movie, it would be a request to think twice. I cannot help but conclude by quoting Matthew Schaeffer's speculation to why the film could fuel anger amongst Indians – "Say an Indian director traveled to New Orleans for a few months to film a movie about Jamal Martin, an impoverished African American who lost his home in Hurricane Katrina, who once had a promising basketball career, but who – following a drive-by shooting – now walks with a permanent limp, whose father is in jail for selling drugs, whose mother is addicted to crack cocaine, whose younger sister was killed by gang-violence, whose brother was arrested by corrupt cops, whose first born child has sickle cell anaemia, and so on. The movie would be widely panned and laughed out of theatres." ☹

Receipts II by Nick Drozd

And so it happens again.

On December 15, 2008 (2008!), at 9:06 AM, somebody went to the school store and bought a 12 ounce Red Bull for \$2.99 and a 12 ounce cup of Dean's Beans coffee for \$1.43. With the addition of the 5% sales tax, the total of the purchase came to \$4.49. Once again, the transaction was funded by a student account, so I once again know who done it. As per usual, his (another he!) identity will not be revealed.

This time around I found the receipt not haphazardly dropped on a heating vent, but rather pressed between the pages of Kathleen Higgins's book *Nietzsche's Zarathustra*. Not a bad choice, mystery man. If you happen to run into her recently dead husband, say "Hi" for me.

One might be troubled thus: "What could someone possibly be doing with 24 ounces of caffeinated drink?" Given this individual's well-known penchant for spicy Latin rhythms, I suspect all 24 ounces were used to fuel a quasi-discotheque party that lasted well into the early hours of December 16, 2008. ☹

A Response to President Hexter's Letter

by Jeffrey Garber

My name is Jeffrey Garber. I have never attended an SJP meeting and I am not involved in the divestment movement; this article is not about that. Rather, I am writing in response to President Hexter's letter sent out through HCA Announcements.

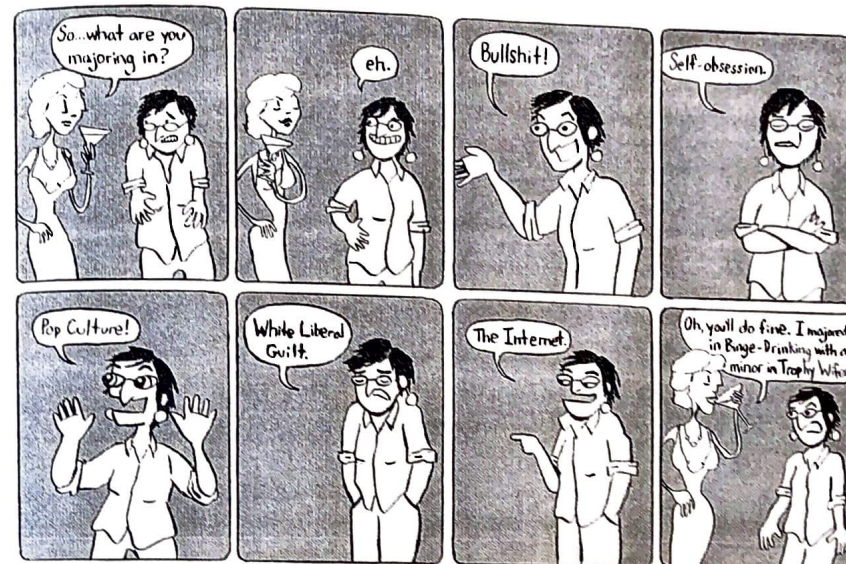
On February 24, President Hexter released a letter to the Hampshire College community espousing Greg Prince's oft-quoted Principles of Discourse. These principles basically boil down to two points: be civil and let those with whom you disagree speak. In this letter President Hexter accuses certain Hampshire students of zealotry. While he explicitly holds back accusations of any intentional intimidation, the President claims that there is a culture of fear on campus preventing students and faculty from speaking their minds. While I doubt the President is lying when he says people have voiced concerns to him, I do believe those fears are unfounded. The President has made very clear where he stands of the issue. As the man with the power at this school he, above all others, has the ability to intimidate those who disagree with him. That puts those who agree with him in power as well.

However, this is not some abstract piece about the politics of power. I am writing to expose how the President uses his power to intimidate students, embarrassing the school in the process. At the most recent Campus Visit Day, a day for prospective students and their parents to come see the school, President Hexter took it upon himself to make his position on the issue of divestment, and his personal opinion of SJP, very clear. This was completely unnecessary as Aaron Berman had already addressed the issue in an extremely tactful manner and, to be honest, the visitors did not care

either way. When the President finished his speech, a fellow Admissions intern stood and, politely and civilly, offered to answer questions any parent or prospective student might have had. Nothing she said was aggressive, nor even did it disagree with the President's speech, she was merely offering her knowledge as a person who had worked closely with SJP. Further, as an Admissions intern, she is extremely experienced in tactfully spinning stories to make Hampshire College look good.

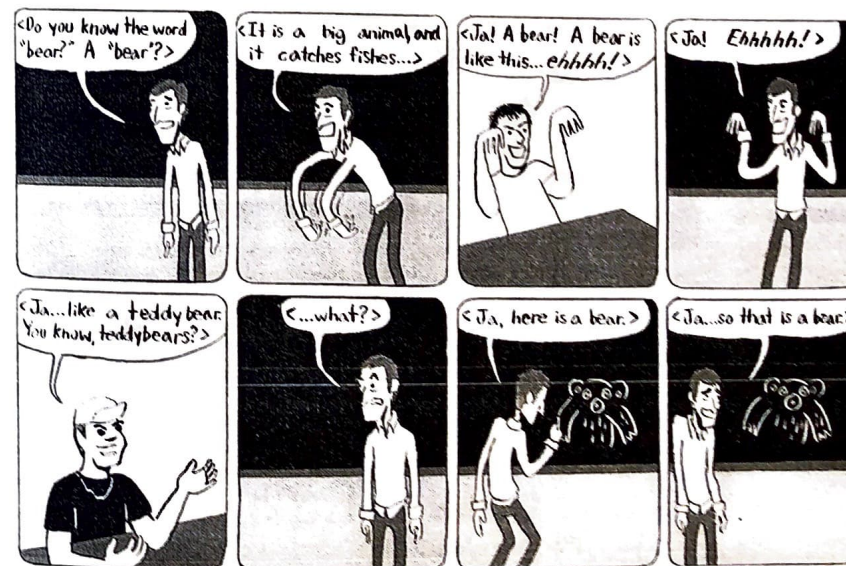
Regardless, while she was speaking, the President approached the student in front of all the visitors. It was clear to all present he was bringing his Presidential power to bear in the most blatant display of intimidation since this whole divestment issue began. What the President said to this student was powerful and frightening enough to bring her to tears. Again, this was in front of hundreds of prospective students and their parents. This event showed a complete lack of tact on the part of President Hexter and exposed the underlying hypocrisy of his repeated appeals to adhere to the Principles of Discourse.

In the President's letter he tries to shift his discourse to a question of application rates. There is a patently untrue rumor of admissions applications being withdrawn due to the divestment. The President is playing off those same fears by not so subtly implying that students are responsible if the school's admissions numbers drop. I say again, on a day with hundreds of prospective students and parents, not one cared about the divestment until the President made his embarrassing display. If any of them decide not to apply because Hampshire does not foster civil discussion, that blame lies squarely with President Hexter.



ATHENA CURRIER actionathena.com

Comics by Athena Currier



Letter to NBC

by Alex Wenchel

Dear NBC,

I've noticed that you have fallen behind badly in Nielsen ratings. Averaging less than 6 million views in primetime viewership is highly unacceptable for a major network, you did so badly, that you actually managed to fall behind Univision in the 18-34 demographic. How is even possible for you to do that atrociously? I would recommend replacing Ben Silverman with someone more qualified to bring in a real audience, someone like me.

I have several ideas that I think could really bring in the viewers and so you can actually compete with Fox's American Idol, CBS's CSI, and ABC's Grey's Anatomy. The first may seem a little odd, but hang with me for a moment. Are you ready? Musical Episodes. I know, it seems like nothing more than a marketing scam, but that's not all it would have to be. A well-executed musical episode can become a cult classic and can be fondly remembered by fans for years to come. To prove my point, let's look at a couple potential options. Lost is a great candidate for a musical episode, imagine the joy the nation would feel as they watched Sawyer break into song as a result of a magical music monster appearance, with any luck killing the most annoying character on television, Kate. And then, after the commercial break, Ben might be seen singing a moving tribute to his arch nemesis and superior island master Locke. Now let's shift our sights to CSI, imagine the joy of seeing Laurence Fishburne singing about the wonders of a decomposing decapitated body to the victim's boyfriend. Yes, I know that neither CSI or Lost airs on NBC, but there is a reason I'm not using NBC shows, people will not jump on board to a show having a musical episode unless it is already good.

This brings me to my second idea, canceling shows that don't deserve to be on the air anymore. Scripted shows that might be a good idea to cancel are... well, Heroes, it hasn't been good since the first season. Other shows that might be canceled... anything at all that Jay Leno touches. Why the hell is he getting a prime time show? I know your confidence is a little shaken and you think that your only chance for survival is to produce low budget talk shows, but seriously, if you don't want to produce original scripted content, I have an idea that I'm sure will bump you into the number one slot in the 18-34 demographic.

Are you ready for it? Pornography. Pornography is the answer. I know that you are going to get some crap from the FCC, but I think it's time America got over their fear of sex and admit that everyone plays that game, why not broadcast it? The fun thing about producing pornography is that if you do it just right, you can manage to call it NBC's newest comedy series. If the plots are just stupid enough, and you hire the least talented actors you can, you have a recipe for success. You will have nailed down the group tv watching demographic and the alone watching demographic. When people are in a group, nothing will bring them more joy than making fun of the weak plotlines and poor acting. When people are alone, nothing will bring them more joy than, well, porn. There is simply no way that American Idol will be able to compete with rigorous thrusting. And if the porn gets popular enough; anyone for a musical episode?

Your only viewer,
Alex Wenchel

Alternative Medicine Gives South African Babies AIDS

by Evan Silberman

I noticed on the Daily Digest that there's an Alternative Health Fair taking place at Hampshire this Friday (perhaps the very day you are reading this). And while most of the alternative therapies being advertised at this fair don't seem to be of the completely ridiculous crackpot variety—though I can tell you right now that “spinal network analysis” is a load of bollocks—I feel compelled to remind my limited audience that most people involved in alternative medicine, even if they do believe that the nonsense they are selling you is helpful, are only out to steal your money and provide you with nothing in return.

Seriously, if you have ever spent money on chakra healing, homeopathic remedies, or anything of that ilk, you are stupid.

“But this is America!” I hear you cry. “I can spend my money on whatever I want to! I'm only hurting myself!” To which I respond: false!

As I learned this week from a chapter of the book *Bad Science* by Ben Goldacre that was released for free on the

Web (see <http://www.badsociety.net/2009/04/matthias-rath-steal-this-chapter/>), there's this enterprising alternative health proponent and vitamin-huckster named Matthias Rath who has pretty much co-opted the entire government public health apparatus of South Africa, a country with ridiculously high rates of HIV infection. Thanks in part to Rath's profiteering, NGOs in South Africa that desperately want to provide free or cheap antiretroviral drugs to South African AIDS patients are having a hell of a hard time. The official position of the South African government is that HIV doesn't cause AIDS and that AIDS can be treated with good nutrition and vitamin supplements. Supplements of the kind that Rath's company purveys, and heavily markets to South Africans.

I really recommend checking out all the terrible stuff this guy has done, and consider whether, perhaps, legitimate scientists just might know a whole lot more about how your body works than generations of deceitful quacks and starry-eyed hippies.

Submit to the Omen!

Email your submissions to
ej07@hampshire.edu

We print everything.

creative writing div iii page limit

by david axel kurtz

it is now the general policy of the hampshire college creative writing program to discourage longer fiction-writing projects as division iiis.

this is due first of all to the propensity of hampsters to say, "im gonna write me a novel!" and then not finishing it. thud putting their committee in the position of having to pass them, despite their having failed to complete their stated goals. or else fail them, and put up with their drivellous prose for yet another semester.

likewise this is due to the department's desire to do things with their time other than read hundreds of pages of unedited prose. which is what happens when quantity replaces quantity, of course.

therefore, hampshire's creative writing program has put a hard cap on the number of pages they will accept as part of a student's div iii.

this cap is set firmly at 80 pages.

just fyi.

signed

the guy whose div iii is, it seems, 600% in excess of the required length. and growing. before the start of his fourth year. god dammit.